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From Saurin on the delay of Conversion.

IN forming the habits of religion, of love, humility, patience, charity, we must habituate ourselves to the duties of them. We never acquire these virtues but by devotion to their influence. It is not more absurd to expect to play skilfully on an instrument, without having acquired the art by practice and application, than that a man will become pious, patient, humble, in one moment, by a simple wish of the soul, without acquiring these virtues by assiduity and care. It is not sufficient to form a sudden resolution. Have you never attended these powerful and pathetic sermons, which forced conviction on the most obdurate breasts? Have you never seen the hearers affected, alarmed, and resolved to reform their lives? And have you never been surprised to see them, after a short interval, return to those vices, which they viewed with horror, and neglect those virtues which appeared to them so amiable? Whence proceeded so sudden a change? Behold it here. This piety, this devotion, these tears, proceeded from an extraneous cause, and not from a habit formed by a course of action, and a fund ac-

quired by labour and diligence. The cause ceasing, the effects subside, the preacher is silent, and every devout feeling soon wears off.

We make a rapid progress in the career of vice. We arrive without difficulty at perfection, in the works of darkness. But the habits of holiness are directly opposed to our constitution. They obstruct all its propensities, and offer a violence to nature. It is by unremitting labour, by perseverance in duty, and by perpetual vigilance, that we must expect the establishment of grace in the heart. We must demolish corruption, before we can erect the edifice of grace. Like the Jews at Jerico, we must work with the sword in one hand and the instrument in the other, equally assiduous to produce that which is not, and to destroy that which already exists.

The aids of the Holy Spirit, and a consciousness of our weakness, are the most powerful motives that can prompt us to seek conversion without delay. If conversion depended on ourselves, if our hearts were in our own power, if we could sanctify ourselves at pleasure, then we might be safe in delaying it.

Is it on a death-bed you rely? How can we presume on what may happen in the hour of death? Have you ever seen the dying? Presume you that we can be in a proper state

for thought and reflection when seized with those presages of death, which announce his approach—those piercing pains, which take every reflection from the soul—those profound lethargies which render unavailing, motives the most powerful, and exhortations the most pathetic—those frequent reveries, which present phantoms and chimeras and fill the soul with a thousand alarms?

But if your complaint be unattended with pain, what passes on these occasions? Our friends, our family, our self-esteem, all unite to make us augur a favourable issue. We hope to recover, and hope inflames desire; the wish to live gives a deeper root to the love of the world. Meanwhile the affliction extends itself, the body weakens, and death arrives before we had seriously thought of it.

But you shrink, on seeing what labour it will cost, what difficulties must be surmounted, what victories must be obtained over yourselves. To-day you still wish to follow your course, to abandon your heart to worldly pleasures and follies, to follow your passions. But *to-morrow* you will cite your wicked propensities before the bar of God, and pronounce their sentence. O sophism of self-esteem carrying with it its own refutation! If this wicked propensity, strengthened to a certain point, appears invincible to-day, shall it be otherwise to-morrow, when to the actions of this day, you shall have added those of another? Nor let it be objected, that the Holy Spirit can suddenly and fully correct our prejudices, and eradicate our corrupt propensities. Undoubtedly we need his aid. If we trust to our own efforts and vigilance, however great, we shall lean upon a bruised reed. But do not imagine, that the operations of the Holy

Spirit are like fabulous enchantments, celebrated in our romances and poets. We cannot too often repeat it, that grace never destroys, but perfects nature. The Spirit of God will abundantly irradiate your mind, *if you vigorously apply to religious contemplation, but He will not infuse the light, if you disdain the study.* The Spirit of God will abundantly establish the reign of grace in your heart, if you assiduously apply to the work; but He will never do it in the midst of dissipation and sin. *Then seek ye the Lord while He may be found.* Weep at the remembrance of your past lives; tremble at the thought that God sends strong delusions on those that *obey not the truth.* But *while you fear, hope, and hoping, act.* Above all offer up your fervent prayers to God. Perhaps moved by your tears He will revoke the sentence; perhaps excited to compassion by your misery, He will heal it by his grace. O! then weep for the past, reform the present, and take salutary cautions for the future. Prostrate yourself at the footstool of the Divine Majesty, and say with your heart, as well as your mouth—*Stay with me Lord; I will not let thee go until thou hast blessed me; until thou hast vanquished my corruption, and given me the earnest of my salvation.*

The Necessity of Divine Teaching.

[Continued from page 285.]

It has already been shown, that it is necessary you should be taught of God. By nature you are ignorant of all spiritual and divine things, and you cannot, by any means in your own power, attain to the knowledge of them. The natural man, while he remains such, be he ever so learned, cannot know

them. We proceed to the second inquiry, which relates to the manner in which God teaches his people.

His established method is by the word, and by the spirit. In all divine teaching, these two go together, the word, and the spirit explaining and applying the word. The word is the whole will of God, which he revealed to be the means of bringing sinners from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness, and from the power of Satan unto God, and unto the kingdom of his dear Son, here in grace, and hereafter in glory.

These great things are spoken of the written word, for it is able, according to the Apostle, to make a man wise unto salvation; but then the quickening spirit must accompany the hearing or reading of it, or else you will never find in it this saving wisdom. It is only a dead letter, unless the living spirit animate it; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. The word is the means in the hands of the Spirit of beginning, carrying on, and perfecting, the life of God in the soul. When the spirit works in it and by it, He makes it effectual, through his mighty operation, to build up and to perfect the man of God. The Holy Spirit puts into his heart to desire the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby. And he does grow, and is nourished up in the words of faith. The Spirit applies the word, and renders it effectual to the promoting of every gracious purpose for which it was revealed, and by its means He makes the man of God wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

The word is the eye, and the Holy Spirit is the light shining upon it. So if you have the word without the Spirit, you have eyes without light;

and if you have the Spirit without the word, you have light, but no eyes to see it. To expect that the Spirit will teach you without the word, is rank enthusiasm, as great madness as to hope to see without eyes; and to expect that the word will teach you without the Spirit, is as great an absurdity as to pretend to see without light.

Do you go then with humility to the word of God to be taught, and do you find that instruction from it of which you stand in need? Perhaps you do read, but you find it very difficult; and it is for the most part a sealed book to you. What is the cause of it? This Scripture cannot be broken, "all thy children shall be taught of God." The fault is not in God, nor yet in his word. Surely then it is in yourself. Either you have not been deeply convinced of your own blindness in spiritual things, and therefore are not practically persuaded of the necessity of the word; or you have not looked up to the Holy Spirit for his divine teaching, praying to Him, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law." Consider these points and examine them closely. Be faithful to your own soul, and be not afraid to discover the true ground of your complaint. Have you been led to read and to hear the word of God, under a strong sense of your darkness and blindness without it? And do you always seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to explain and to apply it? You will not ask wisdom, until you are convinced you lack it; and you will ask it with more or less earnestness, in proportion to the sense you have of your want of it; and when you are made deeply sensible of your great ignorance, then you will become very humble and teachable.

3. Of the proper disposition of mind which God must work in us in order that we may receive and profit by his divine teaching.

Divine teaching is absolutely necessary to the knowledge of divine things, and God teaches his children by his word and his spirit. You may be convinced of these truths in speculation, but it is very difficult to bring them into practice. For such is the pride of the natural man, that he will not submit to be taught, no, not of God. He will exalt his own reasoning faculties above the wisdom of God's word, and above the teaching of God's Spirit. Although he has nothing to be proud of, yet pride is interwoven in his very frame and constitution. Our Lord says, pride proceeds from within, out of the heart. It comes from a corrupt principle that is within us, in the heart; there it has taken deep root, and grown luxuriant, bringing forth a vast crop of proud looks, words and works. Nothing but the Almighty grace of God can pull down the high opinion which this proud creature entertains of himself, and which he will continue to entertain, until he be well disciplined into the knowledge of himself. He must be brought to see his ignorance and to feel his guilt and misery, before he will be humble enough to apply to God for instruction. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is through His gracious operation, that the proud self-sufficient sinner is made thoroughly acquainted with his ignorance and his sinfulness. The Holy Spirit gives him a view of himself in the glass of the law, and shows him, and makes him feel the corruption of his nature, the blindness of his understanding, the depravity of his will, and the rebellion of his heart. The natural man is a bad scholar,

at this humbling lesson. He learns it slowly and with great pain and difficulty. His inbred sins are as dear to him as any member of his body. But by the Holy Spirit, he is brought heartily to wish for deliverance from his ignorance, and from his sins, and thus he is made teachable. He is brought into a proper frame of mind to sit with Mary at the master's feet, hearing his word, in order to be enlightened with saving wisdom, and to be blessed with the comforts of saving faith. To persons of this humble, teachable temper, the Scripture has many sweet promises, both when they first go to the school of Christ, to learn his will, and also when they afterwards sit at his feet, hearing his words, that they may do them.

The things of God are still hid from the wise and prudent, who seek the knowledge of them by mere human learning, which without grace only puffs them up, and hinders them from seeing their want of divine teaching. From all such, He hides the knowledge of spiritual things, but he reveals them to those, whom the Holy Spirit has made humble and teachable. This then is the proper disposition of mind with which the Holy Spirit prepares sinners for divine teaching, and by which he helps them to profit under it. He makes them humble meek and lowly in their own eyes, and desirous of being taught of God.

But perhaps you do not see clearly how you are to attain this humble teachable disposition. Are you convinced of your want of it? If you are, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He has begun to make you sensible of your ignorance, and he must prepare you to receive instruction, as well as give it you.

The desire to be taught of God cometh from him, as well as the teaching. He must work in you both to will and to do. "The preparations of the heart in man, are from the Lord." If there be any preparations in your heart to be taught of God, this is not from yourself, it is from the Lord. Apply to Him, and he will make you an humble teachable scholar in the school of Christ, and you shall be taught of God. "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, for the Lord giveth wisdom" to every one who seeks with humble diligence. Seek as he has directed you, and you shall find. He will teach you, because He has made you teachable. He has already taught you one lesson, which is perhaps the hardest you have to learn—your entire ignorance of divine things. You no longer take up your rest in the fancied abilities of nature, but are consulting the word of God, and praying for the teaching of the Spirit of God. This is the appointed way to receive instruction. And if you wait in this way, He who directed you to the way, will meet you, and instruct you in it. But you must come to Him, humble, under a continual sense of your ignorance and unworthiness, and meek; disposed, like a new born babe, to receive the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. And you must be a diligent scholar. You must read much, and pray more. Yea, you must watch in prayer, with all perseverance, and then the promise which wisdom itself has made, shall be fulfilled to you. He that watches and waits thus, is blessed; for God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness will shine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

A Father's Account of his Youngest Son.

The youngest of my departed sons, (as he assured us when in the immediate view of death) had many religious impressions upon his mind during his childhood; but no solid change of heart seemed to have taken place, 'till about the fourteenth year of his age. When a little boy, he was artful and selfish. His capacity was quick, but he wanted the openness and friendliness of his brother.

The greater part of his life was passed in a state of affliction. When he was about six years old, he had the misfortune to receive a violent blow upon his head, which separated a part of the scalp from the bone. In consequence of this, and the diseases which followed, it was judged proper that he should spend a considerable part of the summer season either at the sea, or an inland watering place. The latter seemed peculiarly useful to him, and was chiefly the place of his abode. There he promoted the establishment of Sunday schools, and he there contracted a great friendship for two or three poor pious men, who were employed as masters.

Besides this affliction, he was subject to violent head-aches, especially upon any close mental application. This disorder proved a great impediment to his learning, yet he obtained two classical prizes in his own college, and was placed on an equality with the first of his year for mathematical knowledge. Before he left the university, a general debility supervened, and he was obliged to forego his disputation in the schools. After quitting the university, he was unable to attend to any discourse that was long. An

attempt to exercise his mental powers in this way brought on immediately a head-ache, and an increase of his general debility.

When he was at school with the Rev. Mr. R. he was exercised in the excellent custom of writing down the sermon after his return from the church, and keeping a journal of his private thoughts and common transactions. He continued this custom as long as he was able to write, but during his last illness he destroyed all that he had written previously to his going to the university.

In his nineteenth year, while he was yet at school, he made a solemn dedication of himself to God. This solemn instrument was kept secret from his most intimate friends, but was found amongst his private papers, after his death.

The change wrought in him by divine grace, truly exemplified the description of a real christian given by the Apostle. If any man, be in Christ, he is a new creature. Instead of the low cunning and selfishness, which prevailed in him when a boy, he became open, generous and affectionate; and while his attentions to those who were about him, partook of an easy politeness, he manifested on all occasions a considerable degree of heavenly mindedness. His views of his own spiritual state were not always alike. His disorder often created a depression of spirits, which cast a gloom upon his spiritual comforts, though it did not always destroy his cheerfulness.

Soon after his arrival at the university, he made the following observations in his journal: "Since I came hither, I sat apart an evening to look over my act of self dedication, with a design to direct my views aright. I rejoice that I made that act, O that I had kept it

with more sincerity, zeal and love. Lord, by thy grace, I resolve to be thy servant, and to seek the salvation of my soul through my Redeemer. O grant me sincerity, and lead me in the right way; and teach me in all my ways to acknowledge thee; so shalt thou direct my paths."

After he had been about three months at the university, he took a review of his conduct, his studies, and the temper of his mind. In this part of his journal is the following declaration: "I think, as far as I can discover of my heart, I would love my Saviour, and consent more and more to his dominion over me. There is a strong body of sin yet in me. My Saviour, I come to thee, without money, and without price, hoping for thy merciful aid to enlighten my eyes, that I may know thee. As the allwise Providence of God has placed me here, let me consider the duties more particularly incumbent on me." These duties he enumerates; and then adds, "O Lord, teach me this, that laying aside every besetting sin, I may run with patience the race set before me. The more I grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour, the more pure and blameless will my conduct be."

When he had completed his twenty-second year, he entered the following reflections in his journal: "I hope God has enabled me to feel a small degree of gratitude for adding another year to my life. Perhaps my life is near a close; and then, O my soul, thy everlasting doom will be sealed. O solemn thought! How can my heart be so besotted by present duties and enjoyments, as to make me forget, that my time of probation must soon forever end, and I must enter, willing or unwilling, prepared or

unprepared, into the world of Spirits. Thy grace alone, O Lord, can incline my thoughtless heart to watchfulness and prayer, that my loins may be girt about, and my lamp burning, so that when the cry of thy coming shall be heard. I may be found ready to enter with thee to the marriage." Speaking of his brother's afflictions, in another place, he says, "he is patient under the hand of God, though it is so severe; and God enables him to place a steadfast trust in his Redeemer. May this lead me to trust in God, who will give strength according to our day, and will certainly, with the temptation, give an ability to bear it. In this confident expectation he was not disappointed; but experienced the same support and consolation in his last trial, as had been vouchsafed to his brother.

His weakness increased about this time. Upon this circumstance he makes the following reflections: "This day I have been worse, and though it was Sunday, I could not attend any place of worship. I was however mercifully much comforted by reading some of our church prayers, &c. They seemed peculiarly sweet to me. May Christ be my hope, my comfort, and all my trust. He is the source of consolation to the poor sinner. May I cordially commit all my concerns to his direction; for he that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, (for me also,) how shall he not with him freely give us all things!

About ten months before his death, the following remarks were written: It is God's good pleasure that I should be still afflicted with much weakness. What shall I say of my submission? What of the improvement I have made under

these afflictions? I find myself to have been more deficient than I thought I was. I think this is the greatest benefit. I have received a little greater knowledge of my own corruption, and of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart, before the great and eternal God. O Lord, let me not deceive myself in this, through vanity and ignorance. Yet before thee I must confess, that the calls thou hast made to me, and the opportunities offered to me, of weaning my heart from the world, and fixing it on thee, who oughtest alone to be the desire and hope of my soul, have been disregarded and slighted to my shame. Where I might have improved, I have neglected it, and when thou hast granted me a peaceful acquiescence, I have spoiled it by my pride, and have grieved the Holy Spirit to leave me again to my own natural darkness, and to the wicked suggestions of my own heart. O Lord still forbear with me. Thou didst not withhold thine only Son from us, Oh! that with Him, thou wouldest grant me, through the Holy Spirit, a thorough change of heart."

The conclusion of his journal was written about a month before his death, and manifests his state of mind in the view of his speedy dissolution. "It has pleased God to afflict me, with a disease unto death, which was a great surprize as well as shock to me. Have I not had a long warning? But, cease there—into what a new and awful situation am I now brought! In a few weeks, I shall be in eternity. O what a word, and coming upon a great sinner! I thank God for his unspeakable gift. Through Him I have hope; and though the waters often go over my head, my God shows me the hope of the Gospel.

I will trust in the Lord Jehovah to the end, for he is my salvation. I have received the greatest affection and care from my friends. I would and do pray for them, that they and I may, through the same grace, arrive in the same glory; and now, O Lord, what remains for me during the short remnant of my life! I know not—thou knowest. I must necessarily suffer now; but be it unto me according to thy word, only grant me thy gracious presence, and the sense of thy love in Christ, and I ask no more. I now commend my soul and body unto thee, for thou hast redeemed them, O Lord God of truth. Amen.

When his disease had confined him to the house, he thought it his duty to abstain from every thing that might aggravate his disorder, and therefore sat much in silence. He was very desirous of examining carefully into the state of his soul, and lamented to me that he found himself incapable of pursuing a course of self-examination, as he wished, thoroughly to try the foundation of his hopes. He said, he was the more desirous of doing this, as he felt much the corruption of his own heart, and saw with grief the defects of his obedience to God. As I was convinced of his utter inability of pursuing any close train of thinking, and was satisfied of the sincerity of his faith and obedience, I ventured to give him the following advice—After reminding him that he was now called to passive rather than to active obedience, I requested him, instead of labouring to draw comfort from a close examination of his own heart, to cast himself, as a lost sinner, at the feet of Christ, trusting only to his precious death, his merits and intercession. Some time after, he told me he had found great help and

comfort from pursuing this advice.

He did not, however, lose sight of the command, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves,” but took an opportunity, as his enfeebled powers would permit, of doing that by degrees, which he could not do at once.

He often wished us to relate to him, any anecdotes of the dying conduct, of his two brothers and sisters, who had gone before, and took great delight in hearing of the patience and pious behaviour of a young man, his cousin, who had died in triumph, after a series of complicated sufferings.

When his brother came home to see him, he addressed himself to him thus: “Don’t let your thoughts of me interrupt your studies. I trust, that by the unmerited mercy of God, and through the atonement of Christ, it shall be well for me. Indeed I have been a great sinner, more than you know of, but Christ died for sinners. Of what consequence is it whether you ever see me again. I hope we are both doing the will of God, and I trust both you and I, and the remainder of our family, shall join with those who are gone before, and be forever with the Lord. Oh! S— that will be happiness worth striving for, and worth dying for.”

At another time, after affectionately kissing his eldest sister, who sat by him, “How I love you, and that girl. (looking at his youngest sister,) I feel the separation. I love you better and better, but I have not loved you as I ought. Though I feel the mortification of parting, I shall have better company; you will allow that.” Some conversation then passed concerning his brothers and sisters, whom he hoped

shortly to meet in glory, which he concluded by saying, "But I think of that the least, (meaning the sight of his friends in Heaven,) I shall see God, (then dwelt awhile on his attributes,) and Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant; I shall see them in all their beauty. I shall be swallowed up in that. I want nothing else."

Throughout the whole of his illness, the grand source of his consolation was the word of God. His debility rendered him incapable of reading or hearing with attention, any considerable portion of scripture at any one time, but he frequently read or heard select portions, on which his mind seemed to feed with delight. Passages exciting to a strong faith in God, through Christ, and to a deep humiliation of soul, were peculiarly pleasing to him.

His desire of being present at our morning family exercises was so great, that he requested to be bro't down stairs, in the arms of two servants, till within a few days of his death. The day before his death, the family met to have prayers in his room, which he seemed to enjoy. During this day, he underwent much bodily pain, and when apparently much distressed, was heard to say, "God's will be done; patience is best." At another time, "the conflict of death will soon be past." His sister hearing him utter this last expression, said to him, "Christ has gone before, and will support you." He replied with great earnestness, "I believe He will."

In the evening he received the sacrament at his own request, as he had twice before since his confinement to the house; and notwithstanding his extreme weakness, repeated some of the prayers along with the minister. He seemed to

bear a remembrance of the most solemn dedication he had made to God, of himself, when a school boy, and at a very late period of his life was heard to repeat that affecting sentence, "O God, look down with pity on thy languishing, dying child."

A short time before he expired, his youngest sister, seeing him suffer much, said to him, "you will soon be released;" to which he replied, "yes, I trust, I shall, by the mercy of God." Not long after this, it pleased God to grant him his dismissal from the burden of the flesh, when I trust he entered into the joy of his Lord.

Four Comprehensive Volumes.

(Abstracted from Newton.)

An eager desire of reading many books, though it is often supposed to be the effect of a taste for knowledge, is perhaps a principal cause of detaining multitudes in ignorance and perplexity. A few well chosen works, carefully perused, and thoroughly digested, will deserve and reward our pains; but a multiplicity of reading is seldom attended with a good effect. Besides the confusion it often brings upon the judgment and memory, it indisposes for close thinking, keeps us poor in the midst of a seeming plenty, by reducing us to live upon a foreign supply, instead of labouring to improve and increase the stock of our own reflections.

The Mighty God, in condescension to the weakness of our faculties, and the brevity of our lives, has comprised all essential knowledge in four comprehensive volumes.

1st. The Bible. The internal characters of this book, arising from its comprehensiveness, simplicity, majesty and authority, sufficiently

prove to every enlightened mind, that it is given by inspiration of God. They who are competent judges of this evidence, are no more disturbed by the suggestions of some men, reputed wise, that it is a human composition, than if they were told that men had invented the sun, and placed it in the firmament. Its fulness speaks its author. No case has yet occurred, or ever will, for which there is not a sufficient provision made in this invaluable treasury. Here we may seek, and we shall not seek in vain, wherewith to combat, and vanquish every error, to illustrate and confirm every spiritual truth. Here are promises suited to every want, directions adapted to every doubt, that can possibly arise. Here is milk for babes, meat for strong men, medicine for the wounded, and refreshment for the weary. The general history of all nations and ages, and the particular experience of each private believer, from the beginning to the end of time, are wonderfully comprized in this single volume; so that whoever reads and improves it aright, may discover his state, his progress, his temptations, his danger and his duty, as distinctly and minutely marked out, as if the whole had been written for him alone. As its contents are of universal concernment, they are proposed in such a manner, as to engage and satisfy the enquiries of all; and the learned have no advantage above the ignorant. It forewarns us that the natural man cannot receive the things of God, can neither understand nor approve them. It points out to us, the necessity of a Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, who has promised to guide those, who seek him by prayer, into all necessary truth. They who are sensible of and im-

plore his assistance, find the seals opened, the veil taken away, and the way of salvation made plain before them.

Again, the effects which it performs demonstrate it to be the word of God. With a powerful and penetrating energy, it alarms and pierces the conscience, discovers the thoughts and intents of the heart, convinces the most obstinate, and makes the most careless tremble. With equal authority and efficacy, it speaks peace to the troubled mind, heals the wounded spirit, and can impart a joy unspeakable and full of glory, in the midst of the deepest distress. It teaches, persuades, comforts and reproves, with an authority that can neither be disputed nor evaded, and often communicates more light and influence by a single sentence, to a plain unlettered believer, than he could derive from the voluminous commentaries of the learned.

2. The second volume which deserves our study, is the Book of Creation. We cannot cast our eyes any where without meeting innumerable proofs of God's wisdom, power, goodness and presence. God is revealed in the least as well as the greatest of his works. The sun and the glow-worm, the fabric of the universe, and each single blade of grass, are equally the effects of divine power. The lines of this book, though very beautiful and expressive in themselves, are not immediately legible by fallen man. The works of creation may be compared to a fair character in cypher, of which the Bible is the key, and without this key they cannot be understood. This book was always open to the Heathens, but they could not read it, "and worshipped the creature more than the Creator." The case is much the

same, at this day, with many reputed wise, whose hearts are not subjected to the authority of the Bible. The study of the works of God, independent of his word, though dignified with the name of philosophy, is no better than an elaborate trifling and waste of time.

3d. The Book of Providence is the third volume, by which we are to be instructed. What we read in the Bible of the sovereignty, wisdom, power, omniscience, and omnipresence of God, of his overruling all events to the accomplishment of his counsels, and the manifestation of his glory; of the care he maintains of his church and people, and of his attention to their prayers, is exemplified by the history of nations and families, and the daily occurrences of private life. The believer receives hourly indubitable proofs that the Lord reigns; that verily there is a God, who judgeth the earth. Here arises a solid confidence; he sees that his concerns are in safe hands. In the history of Joseph, and in the book of Esther, and indeed throughout the bible, we have specimens of the wise unerring Providence of God, and what important consequences depend, under his management, upon the smallest events. By these authentic specimens we learn to judge of the whole; and with still greater advantage by the light of the New Testament, which shows us that the administration of all power in heaven and earth, is in the hands of Jesus. The government is upon his shoulders—He is the King of Nations, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a hair from our heads, without his cognizance; and though his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts; though

his agency is veiled from the eye of sense, by the agency of second causes; yet faith perceives, acknowledges, admires, and trusts his management. This study, like the former, does not require superior natural abilities, but is obvious to the weakest and meanest of his people, so far as their own duty and peace are concerned.

4th. The fourth volume is the Book of the Heart, or of human nature, comprehending the experience of what passes within our own breast, and the observations we make upon the principles and conduct of others, compared with what we read in the word of God. The heart of man is deep, but all its principles and workings in every possible situation, and the various manners in which it is effected by sin, by Satan, by worldly objects, and by grace, in solitude and in company, in prosperity and in affliction, are unfolded in the scripture. Many who are proud of their knowledge, of what they might safely be ignorant of, are utter strangers to themselves. Without an acquaintance with the scripture, they have neither skill nor inclination to look into their own hearts, nor any certain criterion, whereby to judge of the conduct of human life. But the bible teaches us to read this mysterious book also; shows us the source, nature and tendency of our hopes, fears, desires, pursuits and perplexities; the reasons why we cannot be happy in ourselves, and the vanity and insufficiency of every thing around us to help us. The rest and happiness proposed in the gospel, is likewise found to be exactly suitable to the desires and necessities of the awakened heart, and the conduct of those who reject this salvation, as well as the gracious ef-

fects produced in those who really receive it, prove to a demonstration, that the word of God is indeed a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

A Lady's Account of Herself.

As soon as all personal concerns were adjusted, H— said, I have something to communicate, in which I am persuaded you will take a lively interest. With a perplexed air, she said, I have wanted counsellors, comforters, friends. I have seldom had a friend. Her confusion was increased, but she at length added, I am determined to conquer this false shame. There is not a worse symptom in human nature, than that we blush to own what we have not been afraid to do. From you I heard the first remonstrance, which ever seriously affected me. You left me alone. I was abandoned to all the horrors of solitude. I wanted somebody to keep me from myself. The whole view presented such a complication of misery to my mind, and of guilt to my heart, as made me insupportable to myself. My person indeed was at liberty, but my mind was upon the rack. Though I should have rejoiced in the company even of those I detested, so much did I dread being left to my own thoughts, yet I resolved to be alone. For the first time in my life, I was driven to look into myself, to “commune with my own heart.” I took a retrospect of my past conduct; a confused and imperfect one indeed. This review indeed aggravated my distress, still I pursued my distracting self-inquisition.

I had done as wrong things before, but they had never been thus brought home to me. I had indeed made others suffer, but their sufferings had not been placed, as they

ought, before my eyes. But now I saw the fruits of my unfeeling vanity. I beheld the distress and agony I had caused. I was alone. I had none to qualify the deed, no pretended friend to divert my attention to more soothing objects. Tho’ the honest expostulations of my sincere friend had touched me to the quick, yet I confess, could I have been surrounded by the careless and fearless, could I have entered into the company of foolish talkers, my feelings and dreads would soon have been obliterated. I should, as I have often done before, have soon lost all sense of my crimes, my follies and my misery.

Here the lively creature looked so contrite, that I was deeply affected. You are not accustomed, resumed she, to the office of a confessor, nor I to that of a penitent. But I make it a test to myself of my own sincerity, to tell you the whole truth. I wandered from room to room, fancying I should be more at ease in any other than that in which I was. I envied the starving tenant of the meanest garret. Such an one might have pitied the pangs which rent my heart. As I roamed through the apartments of our spacious house, I felt the dreariness of a desert. I endured a sense of want and woe, of which a blameless beggar can form no idea.

I went into the library. I took up a book which had been left on the table. I opened it at the speech of a Pagan. “The time will come when thou shalt mourn deeply, because thou didst not mourn sooner.” I was struck to the heart. Shall a Pagan, said I, thus forcibly reprove me, and shall I neglect to search for truth at the fountain? The struggle in my soul between principle and pride was severe; but after a bitter conflict my resolution

was fixed. I determined to shun the society of the thoughtless and unconcerned, and no longer to seek in vain amusement, the wretched peace which may there be found. I found that I had no safeguard but in flight, and I resolved to fly from those who make a mock at sorrow for sin. I solicited the instruction and society of my tried and faithful friend, though I confess. I looked for "the thorns and briars of reproof." But instead of austerity and reproaches, I found nothing but kindness and affection. My sorrows were soothed, and my better purposes strengthened. The conversation to which I was now accustomed gradually revived in my mind tastes and principles which had been early sown in it, but which the world and its vanities seemed completely to have eradicated. While I employed myself in some useful way, some rationally entertaining book was often read to me, and religious reading and discourse was occasionally introduced, with a wisdom and moderation which increased the effect of both. Knowing my natural levity and wretched habits, my friend generally waited till the proposal came from myself. At first, when I suggested it, it was to please him, at length I began to find a degree of pleasure in it myself.

One day as we were conversing together, I confessed, that at the very time I sought to be the object of general notice, and appeared to others, even to my own family, to be all gaiety and pleasure, I knew nothing of happiness. No wonder, said he. Those who greedily pursue admiration and notice, would be ashamed to sit down with so quiet a thing as happiness. My dear —, said I, correct me, counsel me, instruct me, and be not too

lenient. Well, said —, as you appoint me your physician, as you disclose your case, and ask relief, I will give you a prescription, which, though the simplest thing in the world, will I am certain go a great way towards curing you. As you are not yet five and twenty, your disease, I trust, is not inveterate. If you will be an obedient patient, I will answer for your recovery.

I assured him of my willing adoption of any remedy he might prescribe, as I was certain he would consider my weakness, and adapt his treatment, not so much to what my case absolutely required, as to what my strength was able to bear.

Well then, said —, observe I am no quack; I do not undertake to restore you instantaneously. My medicine may work slowly, but it will work surely. Its success depends upon the punctuality with which it is taken. It may be used in all weathers and all seasons, but I cannot add, with the advertizing doctors, that it requires no confinement. This book, though written by no Charlatan, contains a cure for all diseases. It exhibits not only general directions, but specific cases. Here, turning to a part of it, is your case, or rather your remedy, and read very deliberately — "Commune with your own heart — and in your chamber — and be still."

I now found the grand receipt book, was the Bible. I arose and said, do with me whatever you please, I will be all obedience. Do not spare me; speak your whole mind.

My dearest friend, said —, your life has been one continued opposition to your feelings. You have lived as much below your understanding as your principles. Your conduct has been a system of con-

traditions. With a heart full of tenderness, you have been guilty of repeated acts of cruelty. You have wasted those attentions on the worthless, which the worthy would have been delighted to receive, and those talents on the frivolous, which would have been cherished by the enlightened. You have defeated the use of a fine understanding, by the want of prudence, and robbed society of the example of your good qualities, by your inability to resist and oppose. Inconsideration and vanity have been the joint causes of your malady. At your age it is not incurable. As you have caught it by keeping infected company, there is no possible mode of cure, but by avoiding the contagious air they breathe. Perform your quarantine with patience, and oh! beware of returning to the scene where the plague rages, till your antidote has taken its full effect. In resorting to religion, take care that you do not dishonour it. Never plead piety to God, as an apology for the neglect of any of the relative duties. There are those whom it would delight to be able to report, that it has extinguished your affections, and soured your temper. But disappoint them. If you are in earnest, you must expect some trials. He who prepares those trials for you, will support you under them, will carry you through them, will make them instruments of his glory and of your own eternal happiness. Be frequent in prayer, and study the word of God. Pray for the aid of the Spirit to enable you to understand and apply what you read.

By adhering to these directions, I have begun to get acquainted with my own heart. Little did I suspect the evil that was in it. Yet I am led to believe, that the incessant

whirl in which I have lived, my total want of reflection, my excessive vanity, and complete inconsiderateness, are of themselves causes adequate to any effects which the grossest vices would have produced. It is by following these directions that I have been enabled, by the grace of God, to get the better of the corrupt principles of my nature, and am no longer the vain, inconsiderate creature, which I once was.

Of Sin.

“For behold, I will send serpents and cockatrices among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord.” These, says an eminent divine, were of the most venomous and fiery sort, whose poison once infused into the blood, acts like the most raging fire, consuming and drying up the fluids of the body, and in a short time bringing on certain death. This, he continues, is a just picture of that more deadly poison which the old serpent, the Devil, infused into both body and soul, and the effects of which all the human race have felt. For he drew us all into sin; and the dreadful consequences of sin appear in that variety of diseases which bring down our bodies to the grave; and in that variety of corrupt and depraved appetites, which proves the soul to be alienated from the life of God, and to be incapable until it be changed, of enjoying God. It was sin that thus poisoned our nature, for before sin entered into the world, all things were good; but when sin entered, then the sanction of the law took place. “In the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, dying thou shalt die.”

O sin! what hast thou done! Thou art the author of all the evils which

mankind are capable of suffering men to condemnation." Thus was in earth and hell. And wilt thou our nature corrupted by the fall, afterwards pretend to be our friend? and in nothing does this corruption Wilt thou come to court us with more evidently discover itself, than promises of happiness, to deceive in man's entire blindness and insensibility of their dangerous condition. and thereby most effectually poison They are poisoned, and yet they and destroy our bodies and souls? know it not; and are unwilling to If we have any true love for our- be told of it. They are like the selves, how can we love and che- deaf adder, that stopped her ear, rish sin, which has made us liable which will not hearken to the voice to suffer the first and the second of charmers, charming ever so death? What! is this a friend to be wisely. Is not this an astonishing taken into our bosom? one that will degree of infatuation? Is it not bring both body and soul into hell? one of the strongest delusions of O, let us view sin in this light, and the devil, that he should make those it will help us to see the horrible, very men insensible of the spiritual destructive nature of it. When you maladies, who are exquisitely sensi- behold a dead corpse, think what a ble of the least bodily malady, murderer sin is; for that body would whose fears are all alarmed at the never have died, if sin had not poison- thoughts of their dying to this ed it. Then turn your eyes inwards, world, but who have not the least reflect upon the pains and miseries concern about their dying from which sin causes in you, and say to God and glory? Are you, my be- yourself, shall I love and delight to loved, in this case? Are you easy to serve such an enemy? Shall I give about the state of your soul? Do up the members of my body, as in- you feel no distress about original struments of unrighteousness unto and actual sin? Did you never feel sin, and so work out mine own yourself so sick of both, that you everlasting destruction? As sin is were afraid you should perish the author of all the evil, which I everlastingly? If not, O do consider do or can endure, I will therefore what it is that keeps you in this fight against it, and may the Lord fatal security? Are you not a sinner? God save me from the guilt, and All have sinned. And has not sin deliver me from the dominion of it. poisoned both body and soul? And

This is the language of every is not this one of the sad, stupifying heart, which is made sensible of the effects of its poison, that while the poisonous qualities of sin. When there is but a step between you and the awakened sinner feels the ma- death, yet you have no concern lignant venom working in his con- about your being healed? Are stitution, he will be led to abhor these things so? If they be, O and detest it.

This is the great and universal may Almighty God awaken you to malady—the malady of sin, with a sense of your danger. Oh! that which the old Serpent, the Devil. He may set home and fix such a has poisoned the whole world." conviction of sin upon your con- "As by one man sin entered into the science; that feeling your malady, world, and death by sin, so death you may earnestly seek the Great passed upon all men, in whom all Physician's help, and may happily have sinned." "For by the offence find that there is balm in Gilead.

of one, judgment came upon all

ROMAINE.

Of Divine Providence.

He is not a man of sense (says Bishop Horne) who denies either the Being or the Providence of God; there is no wisdom in Atheism; it is "the fool" who "says in his heart there is no God." And surely to imagine, that he who made the world, should take no care of the world, which he hath made, but, as it were, forgetting that he had made it, should deliver it up, to chance and fate, is an opinion equally foolish with the other. There are some who well know, that if there be a God, and if he observes and take cognizance of human affairs, he must one day punish them for their villanies and their blasphemies. Therefore they endeavour to persuade themselves, there is neither a Providence nor a God. Through the corruption of their hearts, and being given over to a reprobate mind, they are so unfortunate as to succeed in their endeavours; and by such as they can reduce to a like degree of desperate wickedness, they may be accounted wise men. But he who dwelleth in Heaven, knoweth their devices, and laughs them to scorn. He knows a day is coming when his vengeance will cause them to feel the truths which no evidence would induce them to believe. The greatest and best persons of all ages have believed in "a God who governed the world," and wherein can the wisdom of man consist but in observing and studying the works, and dispensations of that God, from the beginning to this day? How senseless is the man, who passes his life without attending to them. By his mercies and his judgments doth our God continually speak to us, and signify his mind, and show forth the glories of his kingdom, for which we are ever more bound to

praise him. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out, studied and traced, by all them that have pleasure therein."

Diligently to mark, and carefully to treasure up in our minds, the special Providences of the Almighty is the way to preserve and nourish our faith and hope in him; it furnishes the grounds of our thankfulness and praise; it stirs up our finest feelings and very best affections towards him, holy joy, humble reverence and hearty love; it supports us under all our sufferings, and affords us comfort in all our sorrows. When adversity presses hard upon a man, when he is stripped of his possessions, and threatened with torture; when enemies persecute, and friends betray or forsake, or when pain and sickness harrass him upon his bed, and sleep departs from his eye lids—gracious Lord, what shall become of him, if at such an hour, a writer shall inform him, there is no help for him in his God; that there is neither Redeemer nor Creator; that the universe is the sport of contending demons; a scene of ravage and desolation; and, instead of being "full of the loving kindness of the Lord" is peopled only with fiends and furies? Before guilt of this infernal die, that of cheating and thieving, of perjury, robbery and murder, melts away and vanishes into nothing.

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Extract.

When we have no help in ourselves what can remain, but that we look up to a higher, and greater power? And to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts, when we consider that the greatest power is the best?